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ABSTRACT

One in a series emanating from a three-year project concerned with the role of women in the English-speaking Caribbean, this publication discusses female participation in politics in Barbados. Project objectives are to establish in the region a data base for teaching, research, and planning purposes and to develop guidelines for a cohesive social policy that recognizes women's needs and draws on their skills and talents for program planning and execution. Discussed are (1) female participation in local politics, (2) female participation in the Legislative Council, House of Assembly, and Senate, (3) female membership on statutory boards, commissions, and public corporations, (4) female partisan involvement in Barbados, and (5) women and electoral politics in Barbados from 1951 through 1981. In Barbados women still remain largely outside the circle of formal political power interests and are yet to create a distinct political ideology. Appendices contain the names of women who served in the Barbados Legislative Council, Senate, and House of Assembly from 1951 through 1981 and of those who were unsuccessful candidates for the House of Assembly, 1951-1981. An interview with Hazeline Odessa Gittens is also included. (RM)

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Women in the Caribbean Project

Volume 3

General Editor: Joycelin Massiah

WOMEN AND POLITICS IN BARBADOS 1948-1981

Neville Duncan

Kenneth O'Brien

With an Introduction by Hon. Billie Miller

Institute of Social and Economic Research
(Eastern Caribbean)
University of the West Indies
Cave Hill, Barbados

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Christine Roberts (compiler)

FOREWORD

WOMEN IN THE CARIBBEAN PROJECT

This volume is one of a series emanating from Phase I of a three-year project concerned with the Role of Women in the English-speaking Caribbean. The project involves a multi-disciplinary team of Caribbean scholars of both sexes covering the fields of Anthropology, Caribbean Literature, Demography, Sociology and Political Science drawn from the three campuses of the UWI and from the University of Guyana.

The principal objectives of the study are to establish in the region a data base for teaching, research and planning purposes and to develop guidelines for a cohesive social policy which recognizes the needs of women and draws on their skills and talents for programme planning and execution. In addition, the project is seen as a means of contributing to the general body of knowledge on the position of women in social life. Specifically, a major contribution anticipated from the project is an extension of the boundaries of the notion of development and development planning during a period of rapid social and economic change within the Caribbean region.

The study was designed in two phases. The first covered the entire region and focused on the collection and review of available documentary material as well as the conduct of a small pilot study designed to test the instruments for use in a larger field study, styled Phase II. This latter phase consisted of detailed interviews of samples of women in Barbados, Antigua, St. Vincent and Guyana. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were employed. The objective was to develop an analytic approach which would permit the linkage between basic and applied research which the research team feels is necessary for the development of relevant policy programmes for women.

The Institute wishes to record its appreciation for the assistance provided by the following persons and agencies:

The Leverhulme Trust Fund which financed Phase I of the project;

the Carnegie Foundation which financed the publication of the series of papers from Phase I of the project;

the persons, who must remain anonymous, whose invaluable comments helped to improve the quality of the papers;

the guest writers who agreed to prepare Introductions to each of the volumes in the series; and

Olive Senior who, at short notice agreed to edit the series.

Joycelin Massiah
Deputy Director
Institute of Social and Economic Research

WOMEN AND POLITICS IN BARBADOS 1948-1981

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Hon. Billie Miller

INTRODUCTION

The writing of a foreword or introduction to this volume on "Women in Politics in Barbados" is as difficult a task as I have ever been asked to do. Being, myself, one of the subjects of this study in an area where analysis shows the ground underfoot to be uncertain makes it no easier.

Duncan and O'Brien tell us in their conclusion much of what we already know to be true of women in politics in Barbados. The extent and style of participation both before and since universal adult suffrage; the dearth of women as members of Parliament; their commitment to the political process. This study is important for many reasons, not the least of them being the need for such facts and data to be gathered and written down together. Another important reason is that what we instinctively know when compiled in this fashion is brought into a clearer and sometimes new perspective. The final conclusion, quite properly drawn, is that a larger role, a greater involvement of women in politics "maybe a function of development rather than of political democratization."

The trends, if they exist yet, are so unclear that general principles can hardly be established. Despite women's long involvement at the lower and middle levels of management in social, industrial, business and political organisations we are still at a stage of development in Barbados where firsts are being scored in the higher and topmost reaches.

As a pioneering woman in politics I may dare to make some observations about women in politics in this region and in this island in particular. I have recognised that exposure to the political system and its proponents, whether early or late in life, and/or active involvement in civic or professional or trade or social work, predisposes women to entry into politics in much the same way that men were predisposed in the early years of their active involvement. Men enter what is known as political life nowadays motivated by a wider range of influences.

But in so many particulars the role of women in politics in Barbados differs very little from that of men. The initial commitment to social and political principles, the will to 'step into the fray' and identify with a cause and the alignment with a party's manifesto are prerequisites, regardless of sex. It will be seen that in governments and parliaments around the world, even those headed by women, there is a paucity of women. This is

not a phenomenon peculiar to Barbados or to the Caribbean or to the Third World but is a stage in our universal development. The commitment of everyday women everywhere is an important influence as is the heightened awareness generated by the Decade of Women. The equalisation process, that is, equality of opportunity, has accelerated during this time as it did following the Suffragette Movement earlier in this century.

I cannot say that there is any special magic or special formula for women in politics. It is a calling with an aura of its own just the same as any other calling. My personal experience is one of early exposure to active politics, leading to commitment and eventually involvement. As one worked closer and closer into the very center of it, there came the realisation that it would and did assume the major force in one's life. Of course, there must have been overwhelming enthusiasm, but, like the men, one got caught up in the Young Socialist group as a teenager, then served in the party secretariat, raised funds, planned campaigns, canvassed (in and out of elections) got drawn into manifesto drafting and running for office. Unlike the men, and like women every where else, women in Barbados do two jobs - housewifery and the other - whatever it be. Men are still not yet emancipated to the extent where two jobs come naturally or where interests outside their particular discipline round out their personalities as men. There are no 'women's issues or women's votes' in Barbados as this study has shown. This is true outside Barbados as well. Perhaps there are no women politicians but rather men, women and politicians.

At this level of existence female chauvinism is no more or less a facet of humankind as male chauvinism. What has come to be known as the Women's Movement becomes another cause that needs assistance, itself and women in politics within it, only a part of the whole pattern of life on this planet.

Editor's Note: Hon. Miss Miller is the first female Minister of Government in Barbados.

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WOMEN AND POLITICS IN BARBADOS

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is part of a larger work; it is intended to provide background information for a multi-focal empirical study of Women in the Caribbean. Much of the theoretical, analytical and correlative arguments and approaches bearing upon the larger work are therefore not reproduced here. The simple objective here is to document available information about women in politics in one country, namely Barbados. Undoubtedly, biographical data on the women who have taken or are actively taking part in political life would have made this study more interesting, but this will have to await a later study. It is hoped that the empirical data referred to above, will deal specifically with the political activity levels and styles of women in general, and not merely those who qualify as 'politicians'.

Female political participation, like politics in Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean, is not amenable to simple straightforward analysis. A wide range of historical and contemporary factors condition how we shape and respond to the political process as well as how we define what we conceive as the ends of politics. Another reason why a simple analysis of female political participation in Barbados, or anywhere else in the region, is rejected, is that a cursory glance at the data suggests that from very early, Barbadian women, for example, were involved at a number of distinct levels of the political process. There are instances of outstanding female political personalities whose activities in recent history date from the 1930s. There are also a number of oral tales and anecdotes which reveal the diversity of the characters, the political skill, and courage of these women in ways that render them potentially as great personalities as their better known male counterparts. The extension of the franchise to all women consequent on the declaration of universal adult suffrage, transformed the politics in Barbados to the point where today females not only exceed males as registered voters, but female participation in political life is taken for granted. Nevertheless, given the frequently advanced allegation that women are severely disadvantaged in society, the potential of the vote is not matched in the actual participation of women in political life.

Political participation of women is to be understood in terms of the scope and quality of politicization afforded them by the political system as a whole. It involves more than the registration and casting of votes at elections or attendance at political meetings, or even informal discussions of political issues with others. Following Putnam [19 p.11][1], female political participation

is discussed in terms of the various levels of political activity appropriate to the five sections of this paper, and the accepted forms of interaction at each level. The concern is with how women operate at each level. The research was guided by the consideration that the casting of periodic secret ballots at one extreme, and proximate decision-making in policy and legislation in, for example, the House of Assembly, at another extreme, are really aspects of a continuum of a single political plane. But there are a range of acts such as joining a political party, recruiting others, electing and being elected to party offices, trade union activities, and so on, which exist on other planes of the political process. These may be directly or indirectly ancillary to the political process. The latter acts are crucial to the political process in any society, as both Duverger [6] and Blondel [2] have shown.

The research task was to begin a systematic gathering and analysis of available information on female political activity in Barbados. The initial inquiry was based on official and documented sources such as election statistics, electoral administrative reports, vestry and other local government minutes, and records, debates and minutes of the Legislative Council, House of Assembly and Senate, and membership of the two major political parties. These data, though rich, are expectedly uneven in quality. For example, vestry records and some political party records are handwritten and unconfirmed. The attempt was made to compile the information, chart the contexts of interaction in each area, and highlight the dynamics of female participation. The research task is incomplete. But it is believed that the materials collected to date provide some basis for analysis. Constraints of time and the necessity of obtaining permission to examine some of the records influenced the manner in which information was collected. It is hoped that it may be possible to complete the data in many areas in the near future.

The research faced another problem. Often the nature of the records being examined dictated what information could be collected. It was necessary to retain a great deal of flexibility, for example, with respect to the headings under which information could be collected. Since 1966, separate records have not been kept of the percentage of females registered or of the percentage turnout of female voters, although figures were available for the percentage share of the votes cast by females. Such figures are important because they permit a calculation of the specific constituencies in which the proportions of female registered voters and votes cast were increasing relative to male voters.

This paper sets out to present data on the actual participation of women in the changed political process in Barbados. It presents initial research findings in five sections:

1. Female participation in local politics.

2. Female participation in the Legislative Council, House of Assembly, and Senate.

3. Female membership on statutory boards, commissions, and public corporations.

4. Female partisan involvement in Barbados.

5. Women and electoral politics in Barbados, 1951-1981.

The research task in Section 1 is to examine the various aspects of female participation in local politics. Normally such a task would involve examination of the data on the vestry system up to 1959, and the three local government areas - Bridgetown, Northern District Council and Southern District Council - between 1959 and their abolition in 1969. It would also involve the collection and examination of data on other levels of local politics such as trade union activity, ratepayers association, and so on. However, for the present purposes, attention was focused specifically on local government.

The methodology adopted for Section 1 included an examination of the vestry minute books for each of the 11 parishes and the three district councils. We excluded committee reports for the following reasons:

(a) Not all of the parishes kept detailed committee reports.

(b) We believe that committee reports would not unearth new relevant information, and therefore no priority is attached to examination of these reports.

(c) We also examined the Electoral Register for local government elections from 1932 to 1954, the latter being the most recent date for the last separate list for local government elections.

The Archives' records of these lists are incomplete in that there are no available electoral lists between 1938 and 1948. We obtained information from electoral lists for five parishes between 1948 and 1954.

Minutes were recorded in longhand. From this it can be inferred that the type of information recorded and the extent of detail varies considerably from one vestry council to another. The information was researched in the manner set out below.

First, we recorded the dates on which female councillors were first elected.

Second, we researched each meeting of that vestry from the year of election of the female member, whether she attended or absented herself from each vestry meeting, and the proportions of females to males attending every meeting. This would give us the total number of vestry meetings in every year and the total number of absences and attendances of the female members in every year.

Third, we recorded the number of important issues in each vestry in those years, and responses of female councillors to these issues by way of speeches and voting support. Minute books do not detail voting divisions, and there are few workable criteria for selecting issues systematically. Therefore, important issues were identified in terms of the length of time they were debated and in relation to the type of topics raised for discussion in a given year. It is proposed to complete research in this area by examining the following records:

1. Minutes and debates in the Vestries of St. Philip - 1952 to 1959; St. Andrew - 1951 to 1959.

2. The District Councils - Northern and Southern - 1959 to 1969.

3. The City of Bridgetown - 1959 to 1969.

4. Case studies of some leading women councillors.

5. Comparative analyses of changes in the local and national electoral registers between 1948 and 1954.

Section 2 of the paper is concerned with female participation in the Legislative Council, House of Assembly and Senate. The specific task is to examine the role of women as 'proximate decision-makers' in parliament during a period characterized by constitutional and electoral change, enlargement of the franchise, and the emergence of a cohesive labour and mass political movement. The approach to data-gathering is similar to that taken for work on the vestry level, namely:

1. Data on the Legislative Council debates and minutes from 1949 when the first female was appointed to this body to its abolition in 1966, were collected and analysed.

We have analysed material in this section from March 1949 to February 1954.

2. Analysis of House of Assembly debates and minutes from sessions 1951 to 1956, 1956 to 1961, 1966 to 1971, 1971 to 1976, and 1976 to the present.

So far we have completed our analysis for the sessions 1951 to 1956 and 1956 to 1961.

3. Analysis of Senate minutes from 1966 to the present.

This work has not yet been undertaken.

We are examining the frequencies with which female members of the Legislative Council, House of Assembly and Senate attended meetings, the crucial issues arising for discussion and the number of speeches women made, as well as their voting patterns on these issues.

Approval has been sought in order to examine Legislative Council and Executive Committee minutes after 1956.

Section 3 deals with female membership on statutory boards, commissions, and public corporations. Available data on statutory boards and committees from 1966 to 1978 were examined. The relative change in the female proportion of membership was investigated, as well as the routine changes of personnel on these boards when a government changes.

Section 4 examines female participation in party politics in Barbados. No serious attempt is made here to discuss the definitions, meanings and conceptualizations associated with the concepts of political parties and political participation.[2] It is sufficient for our purposes to refer to parties in terms of 'partnership' towards political action, the existence of a separate organization, and the mobilization of action for participation in the decision-making process of the society. Neumann [17 p.352][3] summarizes the definition of political party as an articulate organization acting as an intermediary which links "social forces and ideologies to official government institutions and relates them to political action

within the larger political community". Political participation is to some extent an index of a party's functioning and effectiveness in liberal-democratic political systems.

The casting of the vote for a political party is an important measure of political participation in liberal democratic states. This aspect is examined in Section 5. This section focuses upon another important measure of participation, namely, involvement in partisan activity. The form which this takes is obviously dependent upon the political institutions of a society, the traditions regarding strategies for taking power and, as Munroe [16 esp. pp.26-35] suggested, by the actual politics of constitutional change which occurred in the English-speaking Caribbean.[4]

We examine the range of candidacies for electoral political office as well as the exercise by women of policy-making power within the organizational level of the political party. The objective is to document and comment upon the shifts in the politicization of women through the political party process. The initial goal is to develop indices of femaleness of political party membership, femaleness of participation in party activities, and femaleness of office holders in political parties. These data are being collected from the party records of the two dominant parties in Barbados - the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and, the Democratic Labour Party (DLP).[5]

Outline of Data Collection

Data are being collected along the following lines.

A. 1. The proportion of female members of the BLP for 1979-1980.

2. The proportion of female members of the DLP for 1979-1980.

3. Occupation of the female membership of both parties in terms of the following age distribution: 18-22; 23-40; 41-60; 61 and over.

Our aim is to complete an analysis of the total female membership of each party as (a) a percentage of the total female population of voting age and (b) a percentage of the registered female voters in Barbados. Such analysis cannot be undertaken until we complete our data collection of electoral figures of the proportions of registered males and females for either 1976 or 1981. As

is shown in Section 5 of this report, those breakdowns were not available for 1971 and 1976. We hope to achieve by our measurement, an assessment of the degree to which female party involvement is higher or lower than the broader political involvement represented by the casting of the vote by women.

B. 4. The proportion of female members of each party by constituencies from data collection before 1979-1980.

Our purpose is to extract data on the age and occupational distributions from the parties' records. But the records are of uneven quality. Age, and other information, is frequently not given by applicants for party membership. The pre-1976 female membership will not provide information about the involvement of women during particular years of a party's ascendancy and decline. Rather, it will provide data for some comparison of the relative distribution of women between the parties.

Membership in relation to occupational status should assist us in two ways. It should provide some information on relative shifts in the appeals of both parties to given occupational categories of women. Additionally, it should provide information on the occupational distribution of women members on a constituency basis or branch level of the parties.

Some commentators [e.g. Black and McGlen 1 pp.494, 496][6] suggest that women's political involvement is related to their educational levels and their socio-economic interest. Briefly, this view suggests that women with higher education and socio-economic interests tend to greater political involvement. We wish to test the viability of this hypothesis.

C. 5. Finally, we attempted to gather data on the proportion of women on the ruling councils of each party, as well as on the standing committees of the parties. Here too we will examine the age and occupational distribution of such female office holders as between both parties.

So far we have collected data under heading A for both parties, B for one party only, and only generalizations under C for one party.

The task in Section 5 which deals with women and electoral politics in Barbados is to document what is obvious on a cursory examination of election data from 1951

to 1981, that is, to discover the extent to which the potential voting power of women has been utilized in order to transform political representation and policy orientation.

The conclusion seeks to draw the findings of the various sections together and to speculate on the future prospects of women in politics in Barbados, and in the wider English-speaking Caribbean.

1. FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL POLITICS

Introduction

Local government politics in Barbados originated in the English common law traditions of the vestry system [Clarke 4; Jackson 10; Maude 13]. These traditions of decision-making were imported and adapted by the early settlers in the 1630s to Barbadian conditions. The English vestry system was an Elizabethan institution evolved to administer the English Poor Laws. The vestry was an autonomous council consisting of a parish rector, churchwarden, and the church ratepaying members of the parish. Its functions revolved around administration of the almshouses, and relief measures for the poor and indigent.

The Barbadian version of the vestry system was somewhat different. It consisted of a rector who acted as chairman, his deputy, the churchwarden, and a minimum of six to a maximum of 16 elected members. Their tasks were assisted by the creation of parochial boards such as the boards of guardians, boards of health and, after 1962, the central road boards.

By 1650 there were 11 Vestry Councils in the island. Until 1956 the jurisdiction of these councils was based on the 11 ecclesiastical parishes. Unlike its Elizabethan counterpart, the political, policy and administrative functions of the Barbadian vestry were broader, and included development of an annual property tax structure, administration and supervision of hospitals and public health, old age pensions, water supply, police and fire brigades and, in some cases, management of charities such as education scholarships.

Changes in legislation gradually expanded the qualifications of electors to the vestry, and the central government imposed restrictions and regulations to supervise the procedures of the vestries, and employment of local officials. Legislation in the 19th century - for example in 1836, 1840, 1864 and 1884 - modified, among other things, the qualifications for the franchise as well as electoral procedures. Nevertheless, until 1948 women were excluded as candidates for local office, and from voting in local elections because of legislative restrictions and traditions. Such exclusion appeared to have had far reaching implications for the nature and style of political participation of the first female pioneers who became councillors in 1951, 1958 and again in 1959. Such exclusion might well have influenced the style and political quality of the early female politicians after 1951, to

the extent that none of them could be said to have been 'grass roots' politicians.

Research was focused on the minute books of the three Vestry Councils, the City of Bridgetown, and the Northern District Council. These were the only local government councils which had female memberships.

Table 1: Record of Each Female Member of Local Government Councils for the Years 1949 Through 1969

No. of females elected	Year of election	First recorded meetings	Year of resignation	Vestry or Council
1	1950	1951	1969	Christ Church
1	1959 (by-election)	1959	1959	Christ Church
1	1951	1951	-	St. Philip
1	1951	1951	1959	St. Andrew
1	1949	1949	1950	Christ Church
1	1959	1959	1967	Bridgetown
1	1959	1959	1967	Bridgetown
1	1951	1951	1961	St. Andrew and Northern District Council

Our research of the minute books and district council minutes is incomplete. The minute books for Christ Church were examined for the years 1949 to 1959. The minute books of St. Philip were examined for the year 1951.

Female members appear to have a very high record of attendances at council meetings. Although precise figures are unavailable, examination of records indicate that proportionately fewer male council members attained the female attendance records. Of a total of 83 council meetings of the Christ Church Vestry between 1951 and 1959, the single female member was absent for 20 meetings. Thus female attendance was in this case in excess of 75 per cent. Data collected for the St. Philip Vestry council showed that in 1951 - the year in which a female was first elected - the councillor attended 25 of 26 meetings.

Attendance at council meetings is a partial measure of female participation to the extent that such meetings are time-consuming for females who would still be obliged to continue to perform other traditionally female specific roles. Regular attendance is usually an index of ability to participate effectively in meetings. On occasions, knowledge of the complexities of vestry administration may compensate for lack of numerical strength. Undoubtedly, however, small female membership would affect the style and character of female involvement in council work.

Our data suggest some preliminary conclusions about vestry politics. In every case, women members were minorities *vis-à-vis* males. In Christ Church, attendance at meetings suggested that a ratio of female to male councillors was, on average, one to 12 during the years 1951 to 1958. In St. Philip and St. Andrew, the ratio was one to three. Analysis of the minute books also suggested that female councillors spoke infrequently in debates. So there was no evidence that female councillors compensated for their smaller numbers by more frequent interventions in vestry debates.

Further research, including particular case studies, is necessary before it can be established whether there was self-conscious avoidance of 'mere talk'. Nevertheless, women voted consistently. In one case the voting patterns on issues suggested that female councillors in the early years prior to establishment of district councils, tended to vote conservatively. This pattern was also found in the voting records of females on policy issues in the Legislative Council after 1949, as will be discussed briefly in Section 4. It is too early to suggest how much of the explanation for such voting patterns was due to the emergence of political party discipline. Nevertheless, the political history of the vestry system is that membership was more a function of social class and interests than of partisan politics.

The low participation in debate and discussion in the full vestry appears to be compensated for in active participation in sub-committee work. The first female vestry woman in Christ Church was a member of five of nine committees in her third year of office. She was also elected churchwarden by 187 votes from an electorate of 867 in her second and third year of office. This gave her some power to influence the direction and focus of issues in the vestry council, since the churchwarden traditionally acted as chairman of meetings during the rector's absence.[7] This politician remained a member of the building and playing fields committee from 1952 to 1959, and for two successive years was appointed in

absentia to these committees. She was also the first female member of the Legislative Assembly (a nominated chamber).

The foregoing activity and involvement suggest that committee membership did provide some opportunities for affecting policy changes at the local level. Nevertheless, it is difficult to draw such a conclusion from in-depth analysis of the content of the minute books. If participation is measured in terms of comments or speeches by a female member, and the originating of new motions, then the vestry woman spoke or moved motions on only five occasions between 1951 to 1959. Our research showed an average of less than one speech per year.[8] This level of verbal participation corresponded with what we found with respect to the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly. In the former, the first woman appointee made approximately four speeches between 1949 and 1951. In the second case, the first elected female to the House of Assembly made 11 speeches between 1951 and 1960. Both are instances of just over one speech per year.[9]

Female Involvement in Public Policy Issues at the Local Level

Research on female political participation in Dominica, St. Vincent, and Montserrat is still in its preliminary stage. Nevertheless the available records suggested that low women's participation in the formulation of national and local public policy issues in these countries is also partly a function of low female representation on the legislative and executive branches of the state. In spite of the peculiar historical development of the vestry system in Barbados, the ratios of female to male elected representatives on this body are replicated in some other areas.[10] It might well be that real female influence on public policy formulation elsewhere may also be no greater.

In pursuing this line of enquiry, one aim is to examine female participation rates on the issues developed in local government. In order to do this, we examined issues as they developed in vestry councils by taking these issues as they were discussed and voted on. The issues ranged in order of importance from rate assessments compiled annually, responses to the bill providing for reform of local government in 1952, hurricane repair and insurance in 1955, to routine issues such as renovation of parish buildings and applications for pensions from retiring parish employees. There were no objective criteria for selection of issues. The minutes for every meeting

were examined and those items on the agenda which consumed time in discussion, where the voting was divided, which dealt with problems involving registrations with the central government and so on, were selected as central issues.

The period 1952 to 1959 was characterized by impending reform of the vestry system to provide for extension of the administrative units of local government. The Christ Church vestry expressed continued opposition to such enlargement, mainly perhaps, because such reform implied diminution of the traditional power of vestrymen. The records indicate that the female member did not articulate a different position on such reform from her male counterparts.[11] Much of this debate occurred during the two years when the female councillor was churchwarden, and therefore chaired many of the vestry's monthly meetings. Nevertheless, no distinct viewpoint appears to have been proposed by female vestry persons on any vestry council. To be sure, issues were not of such a nature that one necessarily expected a position peculiar to women to be formulated and advanced. The records show only that if there were such issues, no one, neither male nor female, initiated them.

Women and the Parochial Electors Register

Until passage of legislation in 1948, women were excluded from voting or membership in local government. Figures revealed by an examination of the electoral registers for the vestries between 1948 and 1954 are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Female Electors in Five Vestries in 1954

Vestry	Total no. of registered female electors in 1954	Total of registered female electors 1943/44-1954*	1954 registered women as percentage of total
St. Michael	137	2,092	6.5
Christ Church	248	867	28.6
St. Philip	26	233	11.2
St. Andrew	38	323	11.8
St. John	22	132	16.7
Total	471	3,647	12.9

Source: Compiled from lists of electors located at the Barbados Archives.

Notes: *The year 1954 marked the final year in which separate electoral lists were maintained for local and national elections.

Lists of electors are not available for the given years for the remaining six parishes.

The search of electoral lists for each parish took the year 1932 as its starting point and figures were available for each year up to 1954. While the tabulation of these figures is incomplete, initial analysis suggests that the annual percentage increase in the (male) register was extremely small, and in some cases such as St. Andrew, St. John and St. Peter the annual register declined during the 1930s.

The peculiar nature of the electoral franchise in local politics was largely a product of restrictive legislation which imposed high property qualifications and expressly excluded women from the vote between 1697 and 1948.[12] The 1948 amendments did not allow women to use their husband's property qualifications in order to vote. Thus the 1948 provisions were still restricted in so far as the vote was given only to women over 21 years of age who independently owned some property, or were self-employed. There were few such women in Barbados. Thus until 1951 lack of employment and/or property restricted the size of the female vote.

It was difficult to acquire data on the age range of these registered voters. Many listed their occupations as housewives.

Separate electoral lists for local government were not retained after 1954. Thus qualifications for electors to the House of Assembly and local government became the same.

Summary

The combination of church and state reflected in the authority of the rector as chairman and often spokesman, in local affairs, established a tradition in the English common law whereby women were naturally excluded. This exclusion was further legitimized in the early statute law which excluded women from any political role. The property qualification reinforced this tradition because during the 19th century, where women owned property, it was traditionally transferred to their husbands on marriage. Paradoxically, this suggests that the very level of politics which directly affected women's lives carried a built-in disqualification to participation by them. The wide range of issues involving education, public health, roads and social welfare were developed and decided without female participation. To the extent that local politics was a training ground for broader national politics, the exclusion of women created an added disadvantage, since only men could dispense political favours to local constituents.

2. FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND SENATE

In this section the concern is with what Putnam [19] described in his model on political participation as 'proximate decision makers'.[13] We set out to compile and analyse data on the number of women in Barbados who exercised important decision-making power as politicians, and the types of power and authority they exercise in contemporary circumstances, as far as these can be discerned from their voting records on key issues.

In this report, the Legislative Council, which was abolished in Barbados in 1963, is treated in a single discussion along with the Senate and House of Assembly for reasons of space and convenience, notwithstanding the political and constitutional dissimilarities between these two sets of bodies. Penetration of these dissimilarities could assist in clarification of the key issues. One key issue was whether the early female members of the Legislative Council established political role models or styles, and the full extent or range of these models or styles. Another question was whether these early role models influenced the female political élites who succeeded the pioneers in the post-independence era.

In most Caribbean states the right to vote at elections for members to the House of Assembly (or Representatives), and the right to be elected to these Houses are provided for in pre-independence legislation (Representation of the People Act) which stipulated universal adult suffrage and non-discrimination of civic rights of political participation on grounds of race or colour, sex, religion, political beliefs, and so on. Such provisions were in turn expressed in the independence constitution in three important ways. First, they were entrenched in the constitution by directing parliament to ensure that *any law* providing for election of members to the House of Asembly make express provisions giving reasonable opportunity to voters and candidates to vote or run for office.[14] Second, the so-called 'fundamental rights' clauses identified freedom of political expression and freedom to belong to political parties as rights for which any person can seek redress for their abridgement in the High Court.[15] Finally and most importantly, the sections on fundamental rights and electoral law are entrenched in the constitution itself.[16] Two provisions (sections 37 and 43) are not entrenched. These sections provide that any person who is over 21 years and a Commonwealth citizen, and not otherwise disqualified, can stand for election to the House or be appointed to the Senate. But the non-entrenchment would nevertheless render difficult any attempt by parliament through legal means to restrict access of women to involvement in the Barbadian political élite.

In the absence of formal legal or political restrictions on the access of women to membership of the Barbadian, and Caribbean, political élite, some clues to their under-representation can be found by examining the dynamics of interaction between parliamentarians as well as the probable ways in which pre-existing (pre-1951) legal and political restrictions and structures shaped male and female political expectations.

A number of studies on the Caribbean have some bearing on women's politicization. Stone's research [21] was directed to particular conventional expressions of political participation such as attendance at mass meetings, discussions of elections with friends, male-female differentiations in terms of persuading others how to vote, assisting in campaign organization, and so on. He found that males scored higher than females in such activities [p.55]. Presumably the differential political rewards for men as compared to women is due to these differences in participation.

A more relevant study of Jamaica was done by Simmonds whose survey poll showed that not a single women belonged to Jamaica's top 20 per cent of influential leaders. His comment was that educated women tended to marry élite men rather than independently follow 'élite type careers' [20 p.186]. Carmody [3] in a more anthropological thrust studied 'grassroots' leadership in Antigua. This detailed research offered no explanation for the absence of women in leadership positions in trade unions or local politics. The works of Will [22 Ch.6], and Henry and Wilson [9] are instructive in that they identified 'personality politics', on the one hand, and sexual role conflict and role stereotyping on the other hand, as possible factors in Barbadian politics. However, both studies are really statements of conclusions rather than explanations.

The emergence of women in the political élite of Barbados is undoubtedly shaped historically by the plantation economy, the labour revolts of the 1930s, and the general movement towards democratization and constitutional reforms spurred on by the revolts in the West Indies. In addition, the impact of Judaeo-Christian values, especially those aspects which emphasized the dominance of males over households and in political life must not be discounted. However, in this section, the specific task is to examine the role of women as 'proximate decision-makers' in parliament during a period characterized by constitutional and electoral change, enlargement of the franchise, and the emergence of a cohesive labour and mass political movement.

Analysis

The first women to emerge as members of the national political élite were not elected by popular will but were persons of upper and middle class backgrounds who were appointed to the Legislative Council in the island by the then colonial Governors (see Appendix I). The first woman served on the Council from 1949 to 1954. The second served from 1954 to 1958 after which she was elected to the Federal House of Representatives in 1958. The third served from 1963, was named a senator in 1966 and served until 1970. Since 1965, seven other women have been appointed as senators. Three were appointed between 1965 and 1966. One was appointed in 1975, and three were appointed in 1976, one a government senator and two independent senators. Only three women have won seats to the House of Assembly, although ten stood for election between 1951 and 1981 out of a total of some 186 candidates. Analysis of this is done in the section on "Elections in Barbados".

If the three appointees to the Legislative Council are excluded, of the ten females who were appointed or elected to the Senate or the House of Assembly, only two held positions at ministerial rank, and only one, Miss Billie Miller, has risen to cabinet rank as minister. Four women of a total of 21 senators were appointed under the previous party's administration (DLP) and three by the present government (BLP).

During the era of the Legislative Council there was never more than a single female to 11 males. Since the emergence of the Senate there has never been in excess of three female members to 18 males. The relative lack of influence which existed and still exists in the numerical position of women is reflected in the weakness of women as members of the political élite, from analysis of the official records. Table 3 is compiled from the records of the first appointed female and the first elected female in the Legislative Council and the House respectively.

Table 3: Female Attendance and Participation in Legislative Council and House of Assembly for the Dates Specified, 1949-1960

Parliament	No. of meetings	No. attended by women	No. of speeches	Proportion Attendance
Legislative Council				
March 1949-1950	32	31	1	97.0
April 1950-1951	32	29	2	91.0
April 1951 to December 1951	32	15	1	68.2
House of Assembly				
December 1951 to April 1953	64	57	8	89.1
1957 Session	50	44	2	88.0
February to December 1959	47	33	-	70.2
1960 Session	43	25	1	58.1

The records of debates and minutes of the House of Assembly are incomplete. We have tried to analyse the available materials. With the exception of the 1960 session of the House of Assembly, which could be explained in terms other than lack of interest, female attendance in the Legislature and House of Assembly varied from as low as 68.2 per cent to a high of 97.0 per cent. If the highest and the lowest proportions of attendances are excluded because they might represent extreme enthusiasm on the one hand and a decline of interest on the other, then attendance still varies between 90 and 70 per cent. Either form of analysis suggests the high degree of commitment which female members of the political élite in Barbados, in quite different institutions, had for their political roles.

The relatively low number of speeches by women suggests another side to the picture. This side is illustrated - at least in retrospect - in the remarks of the president on welcoming the first female member to hold high political office. After praising her 'intellectual attainments', 'reasoning ability' and 'common sense' he stated, "...I am perfectly certain that you will uphold the dignity which for centuries has been a marked characteristic of this Chamber...". The remark is only significant if we remember that the person being welcomed was of similar social and class background as the 13 gentlemen, and, as the records later reveal, of similar political inclinations as well.

The female political role as revealed in the records suggests characteristics of a 'low key' approach to important policy issues such as holidays with pay for non-union workers, especially domestics; extension of the life of the House of Assembly; reform of the Legislative Council; amendment of the Trade Union Act; and legislation dealing with natural gas and petroleum resources.

The female members' positions on such issues were not significantly different from those of conservative male counterparts. There was vocal support for few women's issues. One instance was support of a policy of separate scholarships for women to English universities. On issues such as, for example, a bill to provide for legal access to maintainance for separated women, there was voting but no verbal support. The record also showed that there was little participation in debate on financial and economic issues.

The lack of real participation in economic issues, which is also evident from the parliamentary record of the first elected female to the House of Assembly, could partially explain why no females rose to Cabinet rank until

recently. Only two of 11 speeches by the first elected female were on financial questions (supplementary estimates). Four were on purely local government issues such as lack of a telephone service in a constituency. One was a woman's issue. It is too early to suggest whether the strengthening of party discipline in the House negatively affected the rise of female élites in Barbadian politics. But this conclusion cannot be rejected without further analysis.

Summary

More extensive research is required, especially comparison of the voting records of female members in the Senate and Legislative Council, in order to establish whether the broadening of the social class composition of women appointees has been accompanied by greater vocal discussion of women's issues. It is also necessary to identify to which types of sub-committees of parliament women have been and are being appointed. It is also the intention to examine differences in performance of 'independent' and government and opposition women senators in order to gauge the effects of party discipline. While much of the record reflected personal beliefs and inclinations of different women, examination of these records was instructive since it supported some of the findings obtained from content analysis of interviews conducted with some of of these women (see Appendix IV).

3. FEMALE MEMBERSHIP ON STATUTORY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

Now if women have potential electoral clout but prefer, as a general rule, to stay in the background and do necessary and meaningful tasks, then an expectation would be that females would be adequately represented on the governing boards of public corporations, statutory boards, and public commissions. Alternatively, or correspondingly, they would be expected to occupy valuable positions in the party organizational structure at both the national and local level. It is the first of these possibilities which will be examined in this section.

Apart from the Child Care Board, the General Nursing Council (abolished 1978), the schools boards of St. Michael's Girls' and Foundation Schools, and perhaps one or two others, women are grossly under-represented on the various boards, commissions, and public corporations. It is worth detailing as much of this as possible. Up to the period 1978-79 there were 14 boards set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs. Six of the 14 had never had any female representation, although it should be noted that two were established only in 1976. Of the rest only one had more than one female represented - two of the eleven-member Prices Commission. Size of these boards normally varied between five and eight. The Ministry of Education and Culture at 1978-79 had 24 boards (21 of which were secondary school boards), with membership size ranging from five to 13. Women have held the majority membership on three school boards - Christ Church Foundation Schools in 1974 and 1975, St. Leonard's Girls' School 1971-75, and Springer Memorial School from 1971-76. On some school boards there is no female representation at all - Lodge School, Parkinson Secondary since 1976 and Princess Margaret since 1975. All told, the picture is dismal.

Women have one representative on the board of the Barbados National Bank, none ever on the board of the Barbados Development Bank, and the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. These boards fall under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Health and National Insurance, headed by a female minister of government, has one committee on which women have adequate representation, that is the Lazaretto Welfare Board. The seven-member Sanitation Authority has one female member, and the nine-member National Insurance Board has had no female representation.

The picture is hardly different in the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Environment. There are no females on the Caves Authority, and Land Surveyors' Boards. Under the BLP Administration, female membership on the nine-member Parks and Beaches Commission has moved from one to four.

The Child Care Board in the Ministry of Labour and Community Services has consistently had a female majority membership. Presumably child care is primarily a woman's responsibility! The other four boards under the purview of the Ministry follow the usual pattern of gross under-representation of females.

Under the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism only in 1976 was there a female representative on the Natural Gas Corporation. The Barbados Industrial Development Corporation has apparently never had a female board member, and, similarly, the Air Transport and Licensing Authority. Presumably female expertise is hard to secure in these areas. Female membership on the thirteen-member Board of Tourism seemed to have stabilized at two. Finally, though not exhaustively, the Prime Minister's Office purveys six boards. Two of these, the Judicial Service, and the Police Service Commissions have not had female representation. This may have something to do with the character of the legal professions and the law enforcement structures which are only changing in recent times with the admission of more women into these areas. Women have generally had majority representation on the Cinematograph Film Censorship Board with membership never falling below 50 per cent. Since 1976 females have had a one-third membership on the board of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

For the period 1971 to 1976, it would appear that female membership on some boards has increased, but only minimally. The overall picture is very disappointing. Taking the year 1978-79, of a total board membership of all the boards under the auspices of ministries of government of 462 members,[17] only 81 or 17.5 per cent were female. For comparative purposes the period 1966-1970 was examined. Taking the year 1970-71 there were 58 boards, compared with 61 for the year 1978-79. Total board membership was 388. Female membership was 48 or 12.4 per cent. There has obviously been some improvement since then but not enough to offer adequate support for the view that women are participating quietly and effectively at this level of political functioning, although this is not to belittle the contribution of women who are, or have been, members of these boards.

4. FEMALE PARTISAN INVOLVEMENT IN BARBADOS

Data currently available provide the following information:

(i) the proportion of female members of the BLP for 1979-1980;

(ii) the proportion of female members of the DLP for 1979-1980;

(iii) the occupational categories of the female membership of both parties in terms of the following age distribution: 18-22; 23-40; 41-60; 61 and over;

(iv) the proportion of female members of *one* political party by constituencies from data collected before 1979-80.

The female proportion of new membership of the two major political parties was 30.3 and 35.4 per cent respectively, for the year 1979-80. Table 4 presents full details of the distribution according to age categories. There was no significant difference between the two parties both in the overall index of female to male new registration for 1979-1980, or between the age categories. Apparently both parties are as attractive or unattractive to female supporters in terms of actual party membership .

The data in Table 4 also reveal that over 40 per cent of the 'new' female members joining the parties in 1979-1980 were between 23 and 40 years of age. In the case of both BLP and DLP, over 43 per cent and 49 per cent respectively of all females joining were in this age range.[18] It is clear that this group constitutes a small portion of the total new membership - 13.5 per cent and 17.6 per cent respectively. The fact that the DLP is able to attract some females who are below the voting age may also be significant as it shows a broadening trend in the politicization of females.

Table 4: Newly Registered Female Party Members in 1979-80 in Percentages and by Age Categories

Age Category (Years)	New Female Members for the BLP (% of total new members)	New Female Members for the DLP (% of total new members)
Below 18	N.A.	1.2
18 - 22	8.2	4.8
23 - 40	13.5	17.6
41 - 60	6.7	9.5
Over 60	1.5	1.0
No Information	0.4	1.3
Total	30.3	35.4

On the whole, Table 4 reveals a clustering of female participation among younger women in 1979-1980. This might be an outcome of changes in perception of political issues such as unemployment and other economic factors. Increased education of women in Barbadian society is probably one factor in this changing interest. The lowering of the voting age to 18 years could be another.

If we take the two age groups of 23 to 40 years and 41 to 60 years, Table 4 shows that the parties are roughly equal in the strengths of their appeals to these two age groups, with a slight advantage in favour of the DLP, the percentage difference being only 5.7 and about 4 per cent. If this trend continues, it suggests a possibly higher turnout of voters at the next election, following the assumption that increased interest in joining political parties would reflect in increased voting. If one of the two parties increases significantly its recruitment of female members, such increase could indicate an advantage at the polls for this party.

A longer-term perspective is provided from data available from the BLP, and presented in Table 5. The crude mean percentage for female party membership over the years was 26.2 per cent for the BLP. An interesting observation is that women living in urbanized areas appear to be more interested in party membership.

Table 5: Pre-1979 Female Party Membership by Constituency for the BLP

	Party Branches	Female per cent of total Membership by branches
1.	Bridgetown	40.0
2.	St. Michael West	35.2
3.	St. Michael North West	41.0
4.	St. Michael South West	33.3
5.	St. Michael North Central	34.3
6.	St. Michael South Central	34.6
7.	St. Michael South	42.9
8.	St. Michael North East	24.7
9.	St. Michael South East	36.1
10.	Christ Church North Central	18.6
11.	Christ Church South Central	39.5
12.	Christ Church West	30.7
13.	Christ Church East	9.9
14.	St. Philip South	24.2
15.	St. Philip North	18.5
16.	St. John	7.1
17.	St. George North	15.3
18.	St. George South	23.8
19.	St. Andrew	18.8
20.	St. Thomas	25.0
21.	St. Joseph	18.3
22.	St. Peter	16.5
23.	St. Lucy	19.7
24.	St. James	20.9

Source: Membership files of the BLP.

Note: We could not collect comparable data for the DLP in the allotted time, partly due to the fact that the filing system requires more extensive research. However, we hope to collect such data for a subsequent paper.

Taking the St. Michael constituencies, Bridgetown, two of the Christ Church constituencies, and St. James as 'urbanized', the crude mean was 34.4 per cent. Taking the other Christ Church constituencies, and the constituencies based in the parishes of St. Philip, St. John, St. George, St. Andrew, St. Thomas, St. Joseph, St. Peter and St. Lucy as being essentially rural, the crude mean was 18.0 per cent. This yielded a difference of 16.4 per cent on average between 'urbanized' and rural areas. Perhaps the closer association on a consistent basis with 'modern' life styles produced a greater sense of political salience in women living in 'urbanized' areas.

Further research on the branch or constituency membership of the DLP is necessary to determine whether comparable proportions of females in urban and rural type areas join the party. But there is little reason to doubt the existence of a pattern similar to that found for the BLP once allowances are made for the relative strength or weakness of the party in a given area. There are two reasons which suggest that this urban/rural membership pattern might exist in both parties. The analysis of the age data presented in Table 4 suggests that there was no significant difference in the 1979-1980 female membership between the two parties. The second is that the crude cumulative data for the DLP female membership in four constituencies/branches show a proportionate female membership similar to that found for the BLP.

Table 6: Occupational Distribution Among Pre-1979 Female Membership of the BLP as a Percentage of Total Female Membership

	Occupational Categories	Female per cent of Total Membership
I.	Managerial, higher professional and lower professional	7.7
II.	Proprietor/own account worker/ farmers/peasant proprietors	3.0
III.	Supervisory/skilled	10.9
IV.	Unskilled/services	22.1
V.	Housewives	16.5
VI.	Not elsewhere classifiable	1.3
VII.	No Information	38.5
	Total	100.0

Source: Collected from the BLP files.

Note: Occupational categories were devised by the researchers.

Table 6 shows female membership distributed according to occupational categories. Of some interest is the fact that the unskilled/services category, Category IV to which domestics and unskilled hotel and factory workers, primarily, were assigned, shows the highest individual category percentage of total membership, with the exception of Category VII on which there is no information. The feeling is that most of Category VII would be placed in Category IV were the information filled in on the application forms, but this, of course, is only a presumption. Nevertheless this assumption is borne out somewhat by Table 7 where the distribution was strengthened in Categories IV and V while the percentage in the 'No Information' category was drastically reduced. Category I accounts for only 7.7 per cent of the female membership of the BLP but this may represent fairly significant support from this category since the overall percentage may be higher than that for the entire female population in Barbados. It would only be valuable as a point in terms of the expectation, following Lane [12] and Milbraith [14], that better educated, and higher status people would tend to participate more in politics.

The occupational distribution of female membership for 1979-1980 as shown in Table 7, permits a comparison between both parties and suggests a similar picture on a long-term basis for the DLP as identified in Table 6 for the BLP. Both Tables 6 and 7 reveal solid participation rates in the political parties by females in Categories III, IV and V, which for the BLP among the pre-1979 membership accounted for 49.5 per cent, and for 1979-80 for 75.5 per cent of the membership. On the face of it, the data suggest that there has been a significant change in the female occupational composition of the BLP party membership, a 26 per cent difference in the three categories currently under examination. It should be noted that the percentage change in the 'No information' category, from 34.4 per cent, suggests that party application forms are being filled out more comprehensively in the current period, therefore the apparent change is not really significant, and may very well reflect the true picture throughout the entire period under review.

Table 7: Occupational Distribution of 1979-80 Female Membership of the BLP and the DLP

	Occupational Categories	BLP %	DLP %
I.	Managerial, higher professional and lower professional	3.8	18.4
II.	Proprietor/own account worker/ farmers/peasant proprietors	1.3	2.1
III.	Supervisory/skilled	21.3	21.8
IV.	Unskilled/services	37.5	28.7
V.	Housewives	17.5	16.7
VI.	Residual	5.0	8.2
VII.	No Information	13.6	4.1
	Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Collected from party files

Note: The above categories were devised by the researchers.

When the two parties are compared in terms of occupational distribution (Table 7) two potentially interesting

points stand out. First, in Category I which covers managerial, higher professional and lower professional females, the DLP appears to have significantly better support than the BLP. The respective percentages are 18.4 and 3.8 per cent. This may have some significance for the perception of the social character of the two parties by females in middle- and upper-middle class occupations, since the data in Tables 6 and 7 for the BLP suggest declining support, from 7.7 per cent among the pre-1979 membership to 3.8 per cent among the 1979-80 membership for the party, in this category.

Secondly, there appears to be some difference in the percentage support among the unskilled services for the two parties. The percentage for the BLP as shown in Table 7 being 37.5 per cent, and 28.7 per cent for the DLP, a difference of 8.8 per cent. This difference may merely reflect differences in registration and file keeping procedures in the two parties in relation to members in good financial standing. The BLP appears to be more diligent in removing non-financial members from their party membership list.

The existence of significant proportions of unskilled workers in both parties suggests that the correlation between higher education and/or occupational status and political participation found in the advanced societies probably has less validity for countries such as Barbados at this stage of their development. Few instances were found of upper class women formally joining political parties in Barbados, although this does not rule out indirect involvement through attendance at social events nor vicarious involvement through their spouses or male relatives. In such and other ways they may exercise real influence on the formulation and definition of issues by their political party. Similarly, the apparent higher representation of working class women does not reflect a proportionate influence.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 reveal the heterogenous basis of partisan support in Barbados, and suggest that no one social factor, whether femaleness, occupational grouping, age category and so on, is of special political significance in the competitive struggle between parties.

General Comment

The BLP was formed in March 1938 and the DLP in 1955. The DLP emerged primarily as a dissident off-shoot of the BLP but also served to integrate most of the popular opposition to the BLP under one banner. Both are mass-based and appeal to broad cross sections of the Barbadian population. These two parties are not very dissimilar in ideology and political outlook, but they vary in political leadership style and organizational structure. Both claim social democratic influences. Both have more or less autonomous women's organizations functioning within the party structures - the Women's League which dates from the 1940s and 1950s and the Democratic League of Women which dates from 1966.

Approximately 13.4 per cent of the full membership of the national executive of the BLP is female. The DLP claims a similar proportion of females in key decision-making areas of its party.

We intend to complete our research with an outline of age, occupational and social class background of these women members. However, it should be noted that the 13.4 per cent proportion is comparable with the proportion of female representation on national party committees and female delegates in party politics which exist in Canada and the U.S.A. Our research shows that of the 13.4 per cent, 5.7 per cent are members of the executive as representatives of the Women's League. Such organizations as distinct women's organizations within the parties, may well allow some opportunity for women to participate in the shaping of policy issues.

The DLP requires that applicants for membership be sponsored by a member in good standing. Research into the most recent applications shows that a number of women members, especially working class women, were sponsored by female members of the party. This recruitment appeared to be intense and is some indication that the nature of female participation may be changing in so far as creation of more jobs for women could bring with it greater opportunities for women to talk to each other outside the home situation, and therefore politicize each other.

Female participation in partisan political activity predated the reform of electoral laws in Barbados in 1951. The political careers of some women such as the late Mrs. E.E. Bourne and Mrs. Muriel Odessa 'Nellie' Weekes attest to this participation. The latter politician advocated reform of the Bastardy Act, equal pay for women, and the idea that alimony cases be heard in camera. This

was unusual because of the generally passive supportive role played by the Women's League (BLP) which is over 20 years old, and the Democratic League of Women which is about 14 years old.

Female partisan political participation in other parts of the Eastern Caribbean also dates from the 1940s and 1950s. In some cases female participation was significant in the founding of the party - the DLP in Barbados (Mrs. Elsie Burrowes), the DLP in Dominica (Mrs. Phyllis Allfrey) the People's Progressive Party (Mrs. Ivy Joshua) and the St. Vincent Labour Party (Mrs. Vilna Cox) in St. Vincent. Generally, women in partisan politics do not appear to have evolved a distinct feminist political ideology.

A search of newspaper materials in the *Advocate-News* showed that between February and August 1970 a number of articles dealt with women in Barbadian society, but only one female attempted to articulate the specific function of a women's arm of a party. This function was identified as ensuring that women acquired majority participation, translating issues which affected women in the community to politically educate all women, as well as ensuring the good of the party.

The political manifestos of the major parties in 1971-81 also revealed the low level of female participation in parties. The BLP identified four specific issues affecting women in 1971 (family planning, raising the minimum marriageable age of women from 12 to 16 years, amending the Divorce Act, and reform of affiliation proceedings). The DLP listed its achievements with respect to the past, but made no specific appeal to women's issues for the future. The former party also proposed a more attractive manifesto with respect to women's issues for the 1976 campaign. Of course this was no real measure of the degree of support for women's issues in either party. But it is clear that the BLP took the initiative in this area, at least in the popular imagination, for the 1976 general election. The 1981 manifestos of both parties reiterated support for the women's struggle for greater equality and justice while noting what had been done so far. Both parties intended to implement fully the recommendations made in the Report on the Commission on the Status of Women.

Further research is necessary in order to understand the underlying dynamic in both parties, and the extent to which supportive work such as fund raising and community liaison by women is rewarded in terms of political office.

5. WOMEN AND ELECTORAL POLITICS IN BARBADOS 1951-1981

Electoral Data

Universal Adult Suffrage (UAS) for all persons 21 years and over was introduced in Barbadian politics at the general election of 1951. At that time, a system of quinquennial elections was also inaugurated. It seems appropriate to examine in some detail the period dating from 1951 to the present.

In every general election since 1951, and in every constituency, there has been a significantly higher absolute number of female than male registered voters. For 1951, 1956 and 1961 the proportion for the female vote, as is shown in Table 8, has been in excess of 57.6 per cent. The female vote could therefore be seen as a potentially salient factor in electoral politics in Barbados. If a proportion of this vote could have been mobilized above mere partisan attachment and in support of female and male candidates who advocated policies of special significance to women, then some independent influence on the male-dominated political scene could be attributed to the female vote. It would be helpful to know whether there were any such candidates. In the absence of this information, the data in Table 8 are somewhat instructive.

Table 8: Percentage of Females Registered, Share of Votes Cast, and Turnout at Six General Elections (1951-1981)

Category	1951	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981
Percentage of females registered	57.6	58.4	58.5	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	54.0
Percentage share of votes cast	51.2	53.7	55.0	53.5	53.6	53.8	55.0
Turnout percentage of female voters	57.5	55.4	57.6	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	72.9

Source: Administrative Reports (Supervisor of Elections, Barbados).

Note: Separate figures on female registered votes and female voter turnout are not published in the Reports for 1966, 1971 and 1976.

Table 8 indicates that the percentage of registered females who voted in each election year, as far as available data will allow, and with the exception of 1981, was less than their proportion in the electorate. It varied from 51.2 per cent in 1951 to a high of 55.0 per cent in 1961 and 1981. Additionally, the turnout of female voters, which up to 1981 had never exceeded 58.0 per cent, reached a significant 72.9 per cent in 1981. The percentages for 1966, 1971 and 1976 are not available, but extrapolating from the 1981 position, it can reasonably be asserted that in recent times, women have taken far more seriously the exercise of their right to vote. The corresponding turnout of male voters for 1951, 1956, 1971 and 1981 was 74.4, 67.1, 66.7 and 70.1 per cent respectively. So that, by 1981, the female voter's percentage turnout was marginally higher than that of the male voters. The national turnout (both male and female) for these years was 64.6, 60.3, 61.3, and 71.6 per cent respectively. For the election years on which we have data, the female turnout was therefore consistently below the national average with the exception of 1981, when the national average was exceeded. In 1981 the turnout in percentage share of votes cast, marginally exceeded the percentage of females registered, but in the previous election years for which there are comparable data, the percentage was disappointingly less than their proportion in the electorate. Significantly higher turnouts (both male and female) for 1966 (the year of Barbados' Independence from Britain), 1971, and 1976 nonetheless might be attributed to a much improved turnout by female voters. The 1981 percentages certainly lend credence to this view. It is evident that women have exercised their right to vote whenever it was extended and that they are now fully a part of the body politic. It remains to be seen whether this commitment extends beyond partisan voting to lend special support to female candidates, or male candidates espousing views in support of issues favourable to women.

Table 9: Total Number of all Candidates, and of Female Candidates in Each General Election, 1951-1981

Candidates	1951	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981
Total number of candidates	46	63	60	59	50	60	59
Total number of female candidates	1	1	2	nil	2	5	3

Source: Compiled from Administrative Reports (Supervisor of Elections) for the years shown above.

Table 9 reveals the paucity of female candidates contesting national elections since 1951. Such representation was highest in 1976 but amounted to only 8.3 per cent of all candidates. The under-representation of female candidates is somewhat disappointing since it has been noted [Section 4] that the average female membership in political parties across constituencies is approximately 26 per cent. This membership in the formal political party organization, to be sure, does not necessarily suggest active involvement in partisan affairs, but it is not unreasonable to suggest that there is a higher potentiality for more females to be adopted as candidates in national elections than is actually the case.

Table 10: Party Affiliation of Female Candidates in Each General Election, 1951-1981

Party	1951	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981
BLP	1	1	1	-	1	2	2
DLP	-	-	-	-	1	2	1
BNP	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Independent	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Total	1	1	2	-	2	5	3

Source: Administrative Reports

Note: The BNP did not contest all the general elections and there were other political parties which emerged and faded which did not run female candidates.

Table 10 shows the party distribution of the female candidates and reveals, *inter alia*, that there was one election year, 1966, when none of the parties offered a female candidate to the electorate.

Of the seven females contesting for a seat in the House of Assembly since 1951, three were successful. Only one of the five female candidates contesting the 1976 general election won a seat, although the percentage of females who voted *vis-à-vis* male voters was reasonably high. Furthermore, issues relating to women were high on the political agenda throughout the campaign. In spite of this, a major champion of women's causes, Mrs. Carmeta Fraser, was badly defeated; albeit, it must be said, by a candidate who himself had championed women's causes and was slated for high political office if his party won the election. Miss Billie Miller, formerly Minister of Health (1976-81) and now Minister of Education, first entered the House of Assembly by way of a by-election in 1976. Mrs. Bourne was the early flag-bearer in national electoral politics having won a seat in 1951 and again in 1956. Mrs. Eastmond who held a seat (1971-76), was a parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of Health and Welfare. It is nonetheless evident that women have either not been recruited or have not been sufficiently supported to gain seats in the national House of Assembly.

Table 11 details the essential facts. The 1981 figures appear to prove that Miss Miller does not rely at all on extra-partisan female support to win her seat. Indeed, the turnout percentage of female voters of 64.0 per cent was significantly below the national average of 71.6 per cent. On the other hand, although the turnout of female voters in the two constituencies where Ms. Clarke and Mrs. Leacock ran, exceeded the national average, these candidates did not appear to receive special support from female voters.

Table 11: Electoral Data on Female Candidates, 1951-1981

Year	Constituency	Candidate/Party	Percentage of females on electoral register	Female votes as a percentage of total votes	Percentage of females on electoral register who actually voted	Outcome
1951	St. Andrew	Mrs. E.E. Bourne (BLP)	54.5	49.1	67.8	Won
1956	St. Andrew	Mrs. E.E. Bourne (BLP)	55.9	52.9	65.5	Won
1961	St. Andrew	Mrs. E.E. Bourne (BLP)	57.3	52.3	63.8	Lost
1961	St. George	Mrs. E.L. Martin (BNP)	57.7	52.9	65.4	Lost
1971	St. Michael S.W.	Miss N. Weekes (BLP)	-	54.7	-	Lost
1971	St. Michael N.E.	Mrs. G.L. Eastmond (DLP)	-	55.0	-	Won
1976	St. Michael S.W.	Miss N. Weekes (BLP)	-	53.3	-	Lost
1976	St. Michael N.E.	Mrs. G.L. Eastmond (Independent)	-	54.5	-	Lost

Continued .../

Table 11: Electoral Data on Female Candidates, 1951-1981 (Continued)

Year	Constituency	Candidate/Party	Percentage of females on electoral register	Female votes as a percentage of total votes	Percentage of females on electoral register who actually voted	Outcome
1976	Bridgetown	Miss B. Miller (BLP)	-	57.5	-	Won
1976	Christ Church W.	Mrs. V.C. Fraser (DLP)	-	56.1	-	Lost
1976	St. Peter	Mrs. S. Leacock (DLP)	-	52.5	-	Lost
1981	Bridgetown	Miss B. Miller (BLP)	54.1	57.0	64.0	Won
1981	St. Michael S.C.	Miss J. Clarke (BLP)	56.6	57.7	72.3	Lost
1981	St. Peter	Mrs. S. Leacock (DLP)	52.1	53.4	77.3	Lost

Source: The above table was compiled from data extracted from the Electoral Reports for eight national elections between 1951 and 1981.

Note: For biodata on these candidates please refer to Appendices II and III.

CONCLUSIONS

In concluding this study it must be emphasized that some data gathering relevant to this paper has yet to be completed. The major problem is one of access to materials, as well as unavailability of certain records. Nonetheless, there were many findings which allowed a number of issues to be raised, relevant to the political involvement of women in Barbados. Some of the other limitations of this study will no doubt be removed when the findings from the survey on women in the Caribbean relevant to political involvement are analysed.

We noted in Section 5 that the turnout of female voters, or the votes cast, initially compared unfavourably with the turnout of male voters. It now appears that there is full commitment among women to the electoral system. Nonetheless, this voting power has been confined within partisan boundaries. It is a matter of speculation whether women's failure to use their potential voting power is due to historical considerations such as social class and sex role conditioning on the one hand, or to apathy regarding partisan political activism - a necessary part of participation in elections in any small society - on the other hand. To suggest that low participation is due to the nature of the political policies presented by the parties is a familiar chicken and egg problem, since low participation in voting at national elections predates the emergence of the contemporary political party structures. This line of enquiry would be fruitful mainly in explaining attitudinal factors among younger voters who would have come on the voters' register since the lowering of the voting age in 1976.

Additionally, there has been no clear indication of pro-equal rights for women candidates, who have been able to galvanize the latent interest of the female vote. There is, patently, a higher potentiality for more females to be adopted as candidates in national elections. Given the fact that women have neither been recruited nor been sufficiently supported for seats in the national House of Assembly, there is clearly a place for stronger women's movements with the appropriate ideology to challenge and turn around existing patterns of political involvement.

In order to clarify the problem of low female participation we investigated local government politics. This area predated the 1951 general election and was also free of open partisan activity, under the old vestry system.

The first thing we observed about the state of the local electors' register of five vestries during the period 1944-1954 (the last dates during which separate lists were maintained for local and national elections in Barbados) is that the number of female registered voters in 1954 was reasonably high, ranging from a high of 28.6 per cent of the total accumulated female registration up to 1954 in Christ Church to 6.5 per cent in St. Michael. This suggests that more women were in fact participating at the electoral level in local politics in 1954 than was previously the case. This is significant when we consider that women were barred from voting prior to 1944, and those who were allowed to register for local elections after 1944 required an independent income or minimal property qualifications. An additional consideration is that persons had to apply to be put on the local electoral lists. Thus the fact that a number of women were involved in local politics as vestry council members from 1951 and that women voted, suggested that they participated politically even where the social climate discouraged their full participation. Before 1954, women voters were a minority on the local electors list.

Assessment of political performance of women councillors on the vestry councils and the three district councils and the Bridgetown City Council which succeeded the vestry system in 1959, was important for another reason. Local government politics was often a stepping stone into national politics for many men, and a small number of women. The issue of the extent to which local political careers constituted such a stepping stone for female office holders can partly be understood through examination of the relative performances of the women during their tenure in local affairs. We attempted such an examination and found that in general females established high attendance records at meetings and worked on a number of committees. But they made few, if any, radical innovations in local government procedure or policies, judging from the written record. This conclusion is perhaps not unexpected considering the immediate social milieu within which local council meetings took place, as well as the fact that women were outnumbered by men on every council.

Vestry records also revealed the extent to which the conduct of meetings and the issues raised and resolved at such meetings had become routinized and conservative. The Maude [13] and Jackson [10] Reports have adequately established the historical connection between the vestry system and established religion in Barbados. They also revealed the extent to which vestrymen could use health, road repair and lighting and parish building maintenance as sources of job creation in the exercise of personal

power. The long established exclusion of women from this system plus their lack of participation when they were admitted after 1951 probably contributed to their not being perceived as power brokers and decision-makers in the popular perception of Barbadians.

It must be remembered, of course, that women first entered local and Legislative Council politics at a period - the 1940s - when both systems were in reluctant confrontation with broadening demands for popular representation and democratization from the National Assembly, and ultimately from the masses. The demands for social change of the late 1930s, the partial legitimation of these demands in the Moyne Commission reports and the liberalizing consequences of World War II were winning the struggle against a local council system based on a very narrow franchise, and an appointed Legislative Council. The pioneer female representatives in both systems were undoubtedly caught between the conservatism of entrenched political interests on the one hand, and the rising tides of mass society politics, on the other. And they did not yet have the 'ideology' of feminism with which to join the new tides on their own terms as women.

The minutes and records of the various vestries tended to present a contrasting picture. They did not reveal the crises of change, nor could the political opinions of leading councilmen and women on the future trends of politics be discovered, consistently, from the face of the records. One exception was that the Legislative Council members, with one or two notable exceptions, vocally resisted demands for democratization. In general, however, vestry minutes revealed ongoing concern about a mass of administrative details - perhaps better suited to bureaucrats - regarding tax assessments, building, renovation, hurricane repair and insurance, the church organist's salary, street lighting, and so on. The minutes of the last eight years of the Christ Church Vestry (1951-1959) yielded only two references to the impending reform of the system. This may well have been because issues unrelated to concrete administrative decisions were excluded from the records. The political outlook of members would have been better understood if wider ranging debates of council members had been recorded in the vestry minutes. In fact some vestry minutes were extremely brief. They merely recorded the dates of meetings, members present and the decisions taken.

The nature of the minute records shaped the format used for collecting data on female participation in local politics. We used the simple technique of collecting

information under the following heads: the dates of meetings and absences; the number and types of issues raised for discussion and resolution; the comments by and the participation of women in the committee work. We used a similar format to assess the female participation in the Legislative Council, National Assembly and the Senate.

The acts of attending public political meetings and casting a vote at quinquennial elections constitute distinct forms of participation from ongoing involvement and interest in the development of the political party system. Females constitute about 29.8 and 35.4 per cent of the overall memberships of the two dominant parties, and between 7 and 10 per cent of the official and organizational leadership of these parties. Between 43 and 49 per cent of all females joining one of the two dominant parties are between 25 and 40 years of age, and the largest proportion of these women are in the semi-skilled and unskilled categories of workers. It is also reasonable to presume that a large proportion of male party members are also in these categories of workers. If the bulk of membership in both parties is working class, then this trend clearly contrasts with the North American and European experiences. The prevailing conception among political analysts in these industrialized areas is that mainly educated and middle and lower middle-class women demonstrate sustained interest and activity in ongoing partisan activity during periods of no elections. The argument suggests that it is women with an interest in policies affecting suburban living who have such sustained interest.

Individual women participated in partisan political activity long before universal adult suffrage became a legal reality, and there is evidence that they took active roles in the founding of one of the major parties (the DLP) in 1955. Both the BLP and the DLP have distinct women's organizations which do vital supportive and liaison work in the wider community. The women's organizations also have some representation on the national executive of the parties although the extent of this representation is related to the strategy of organization of each party. More extensive research is required before we could establish conclusively the relative effects of branch type organization of the parties on the capacities of women to participate in party affairs, and the extent to which the women's groups participate as caucuses within the parties. But this area of investigation is faced with problems stemming from the nature of record keeping peculiar to each party, and the comprehensiveness of such records.

Moreover, only such research could establish the validity of our observation that women party members have not yet clearly articulated a distinct political ideology. Neither our reviews of the party manifestos nor the level of female candidacies between 1951 and 1981 has revealed the existence of a distinct female ideology, even allowing for the fact that party unity would tend to emerge above particular interest positions at election times.

We turn now to female participation on statutory boards. Such appointments are largely based on the professional qualifications and skills of the appointees. But some political considerations also play a part. We examined the available data on statutory boards and committees from 1966 to 1978. Female membership on statutory boards doubled during this period - rising from 34 per cent in 1966 to 47.9 per cent in 1971, to 58.6 per cent in 1976, to 66.6 per cent in 1978. It was impossible to assess the relative change in the last two years, but the government announced a number of new female appointees to various boards between 1978 and the present. Overall, however, the ratio of women to men on these bodies is still very low for the females. This is one area in which female political participation is related to changes in attitudes to female education and the broadening scope in the areas of educational skills sought by women. But it must be remembered that as recently as the 1949 to 1951 period, the attempt to establish a separate scheme for scholarships for women in Barbados was eventually terminated in the Legislative Council because of the twin issues of lack of agreement on how to implement the scheme and the absence of female university entrants who met the criteria for the award of scholarships.

The personnel on statutory boards tend to change when the government changes. One area of concern was the effect of such routine changes on the continuity of the expansion in female expertise in the political and administrative spheres, precisely because women are minorities on most of the boards and do not yet enjoy a competitive advantage in the first place. It is difficult to see how this paradox can be resolved without deliberately increasing the female to male ratios on most boards. Women are minorities even on the 24 boards falling under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Our research showed only two boards with female majority representation: the Child Care Board and the Cinematograph Film Censorship Board. In this regard it is difficult to assess the overall impact of the changes from 1966, because many boards have been abolished as functions merged in existing boards with administrative reform of the system. Notwithstanding our comments,

increasing appointments of females to statutory boards afforded some effective participation to a number of qualified and competent persons who did not then have to adjust to the conflict and competition of the electoral process.

Women first entered the Legislative Council in 1949, the National Assembly in 1951, and the Senate in 1966. The effectiveness of such representation is partly seen in the fact that in the Legislative Council there was always one female representative working with 12 men. The ratio of females to males in the National Assembly has been one to 24 since 1951, and only one female has won ministerial rank in the present government. Only one of 12 government senators, and two 'independent' senators are female in the present system (1976-1981 session).

The irony of the rise of women to national prominence in Barbados is that their representation in both the vestry system and the Legislative Council coincided with the intensity of the struggle for the new mass society politics following the labour and political revolts of the 1930s and the demands for democratization following World War II. By 1949 the vestry system came to be viewed as an inefficient anachronism with a limited electorate based on property, and the Legislative Council as a political process based on privilege and entrenched interests. Both were in various ways engaged in resisting challenges for reform from the popular assembly. Our analysis suggests that the first female representative on both bodies might have been caught between these conflicting interests of the conservatism of entrenched interests on the one hand, and the rising tide of mass society politics on the other.

Their politics of survival may have established them as role models without extensive 'grass roots' appeal. We have tried to show that they set high attendance records but made, apparently, ineffective use of the forums for speeches aimed at politicizing women in Barbados. These efforts were succeeded by nationalist politics and political party discipline. Strong female politicians are less likely under this system, partly because female political loyalty is channelled into broader issues shaped by majority interests. Women have turned out and voted in larger numbers than was previously the case. However, in a sense, they still remain largely outside the circle of formal political power interests. Women are yet to create a distinct political ideology, not in the feminist sense, but in the sense of a distinct definition of political and social development. This may be a function of development rather than of political democratization.

Footnotes

[1] But see also p.242 of Simmonds [20]. Putnam's model may be represented as follows:

> Proximate Decision Makers (party political élites and cabinet)
>
> Influentials (university professors, distinguished lawyers and prominent businessmen)
>
> Attentive Public (activists and those paying unusual attention to public affairs)
>
> Voters (majority of electorate whose collective resource is numbers)
>
> Non-Participants (those who by deliberate choice or legal restriction are excluded).

[2] On participation see, for example, works by Pateman [18], Milbraith and Goel [15], Elcock [8], Eckstein and Apter [7 pp.332-350, 378-386].

[3] See also Coleman's assertion that the function of the party, even in 'semi-competitive' modernizing societies is the regulatory role of processing raw claims in aggregable form through the polity and directing these claims, thereby emphasising the distinction between society and polity. [Coleman 5 p.533].

[4] Munroe summarized the imperatives underlying constitutional advance in Jamaica - and by implication the English-speaking Caribbean - as administrative orderliness and keeping social peace, and enlistment of the cooperation of the growing black middle class. The theory here is that these patterns rather than mobilization of black nationalism shaped the organization and strategies of political parties.

[5] We are grateful for the kind cooperation of the BLP and DLP in allowing us access to their files. The data-gathering here is still incomplete. Approval of our request to examine the records was only recently obtained.

[6] Here the author suggests that 'non-professional' employment for women, for example sales and clerical jobs, does not necessarily increase women's political involvement because such work does not significantly increase contact with men or organizations likely to increase political opportunities for women. Moreover, such jobs may exacerbate the dual role conflicts of mother and wage-earner.

[7]The main committees to which this female was appointed were the Cemetery Board, Building Committee, Playing Fields Committee and Committee for renting pews. Other tasks allotted to her included being co-opted with two others to draft sympathy messages to the Royal Family on the death of the monarch in 1958; membership on the Coronation Committee which made parish arrangements to celebrate the coronation of Elizabeth II; as a member of the Committee for Revising the Tax Rolls, for one term.

[8]The participation in these instances consisted of successfuly moving appointment of a male vestryman as acting churchwarden, speeches during debate supporting a request for funding by a local women's organization, providing information on scholarships for vestry scholars (1953), speeches regarding proposals to erect matron's quarters for the local almshouse (1954), and moving a motion to award scholarships to secondary school students (1958). The foregoing excludes speeches at the committee level.

[9]This information is taken from careful analysis of Legislative Council and House of Assembly debates, and minutes during the years referred to.

[10]In Dominica, for example, data are available for 31 village and two town councils. A breakdown is provided for 29 village councils of which only five had elected female representation in excess of 40 per cent. The other 24 had representation of between 12.4 and 25 per cent - figures are for 1979-1980. Women have been represented on local government boards since 1946. Again as of 1975 only about two per cent of elected representatives in this state are women. Precise figures are unavailable for Grenada, St. Vincent and Montserrat with respect to females in local government. It is hoped that such figures will be available later on.

[11]Note that the minutes of vestries such as St. Philip did not even record the debates on questions such as reform of the vestry system.

[12]An early statute of 1656 provided the franchise for freeholders only. This was modified in 1697 to expressly exclude non-whites and women, as well as other males under 21 years of age. Up to 1831 the property requirement for voters and candidates was freehold possession of ten acres of land, or a house in a town with an annual rateable value of ten pounds sterling, or alternatively, possession of 200 lbs of muscovado sugar.

In 1831 the legislation was amended to include Jews and free coloured males. But the rateable value in town houses was increased to 30 pounds sterling.

Legislative amendments were passed in 1842, 1896 and 1901 which made adjustments in the property qualifications. But it was not until

the Vestries Act, 1948, s.7 that qualifications were broadened to allow poor males and women with some independent property to vote in local elections. These qualifications may be summarized as follows:

1. Ownership of land in the parish of an annual value of £2.10s.
2. Rents and profits on land of an annual value of £2.10s.
3. Occupations of land and buildings of an annual value of £15.0s.
4. Payment in the previous year of parochial taxes of not less than £1.0s.

[13]For a schematic representation of Putnam's model see Footnote 1.

[14]See for example, Barbados Independence Order, 1966, s.42 relating to Electoral Law. These sections are reproduced from other Constitutions including Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana and are to be found in the Independent States of the Eastern Caribbean.

[15]Barbados Independence Order, sections 21, 22 and especially 24.

[16]Ibid.

[17]The lists of appointments to statutory boards, public corporations and commissions were culled from various parliamentary reports.

[18]

Data on new memberships shown below were collected for the period January-December 1979 and January-August 1980

Age Category	Percentage Distribution of New Female Membership	
	BLP	DLP
Below 18 years	N.A.	3.4
18 - 22 years	27.7	13.7
23 - 40 years	43.7	49.5
41 - 60 years	5.0	3.1
No Information	1.2	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0

[19]This may partly be due to differences in the organizational ethos between the two parties.

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Appendix I

WOMEN WHO SERVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND SENATE OF BARBADOS 1951-1981

MISS M.L.St.C. BLACKMAN served as an independent senator between 1976-1981. She is attached to Parent Education for Development in Barbados (PAREDOS) and participates in a radio programme which essays to promote that aim.

MISS JUNE CLARKE was the first female president of the Barbados Chamber of Commerce. She unsuccessfully contested the 1981 general election for the constituency of St. Michael South Central. She has been serving in the Senate since 1981.

MRS. N.G. DAYSH was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1954, second only to Mrs. Muriel Hanschell. She served until 1958. Prior to 1954 she served in the St. Philip Vestry. She was awarded the OBE in 1957.

MRS. CYRALENE FIELDS served the Senate of Barbados between 1965 and 1966, and later as Mrs. Cyralene Gale between 1974 and 1975. She was named High Commissioner to Canada in 1975 where she served until 1976.

MISS H. ODESSA GITTENS was born in 1911 and educated privately. She later trained as a teacher in England. She was appointed to the Senate in 1964 and served until 1971. She was a parliamentary secretary in the Ministries of Education and of Health.

MRS. M. HANSCHELL was born in 1884 and was educated at Cambridge University where she gained her Mathematics Tripos. She was the first woman to be nominated to the Legislative Council in 1949. She was awarded an MBE.

MRS. SYBIL LEACOCK replaced MRS. CYRALENE GALE in the Senate in 1975 and served until 1976. She also unsuccessfully contested the 1976 and 1981 general elections on the ticket of the Democratic Labour Party for the constituency of St. Peter. Mrs. Leacock is a teacher by profession.

MRS. ENID LYNCH was headmistress of the Girls' Foundation School from 1959 to 1976. She served as an independent senator between 1976 and 1981. Mrs. Lynch was reappointed to the Senate after the 1981 general election.

MISS O. ADELLE LYNCH is a lecturer in French at the Barbados Community College. She served as a senator between 1966 and 1981.

Continued .../

APPENDIX I

MRS. MILROY REECE is an accountant at the Barbados Marketing Corporation. She is the first female general secretary of the Barbados Labour Party. She was one of the 12 senators named by the party after the 1981 general election.

MRS. ERMA V. ROCK was elected a member of the St. Andrew Vestry in 1951 and served until 1959. In 1966 she was nominated to the Senate where she served until 1976.

MRS. H.A. TALMA served the Christ Church Vestry from 1950 to 1967. She was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1958 and served until 1964.

Appendix II

WOMEN WHO SERVED IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF BARBADOS 1951-1981

MRS.E.E. BOURNE was the first female elected to the House of Assembly of Barbados in 1951. She had contested on the ticket of the Barbados Labour Party for the constituency of St. Andrew. Mrs. Bourne served until 1961. She also served in the St. Andrew Vestry.

MRS. G.L. EASTMOND is a businesswoman who was elected to the House of Assembly on the ticket of the Democratic Labour Party for the constituency of St. Michael North East in 1971. She was parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of Health until 1975 when she formed her United People's Party. She contested the 1976 general election as an independent. She lost. Mrs. Eastmond is now the first female president of the Barbados Employers Confederation.

MISS BILLIE MILLER is an Attorney-at-Law and member of the Barbados Labour Party. She successfully contested the by-election in the City of Bridgetown in 1976. She also won the general elections of 1976 and 1981. She served as Minister of Health between 1976 and 1981 and as Minister of Education since 1981.

Appendix III

WOMEN WHO WERE UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES FOR THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF BARBADOS, 1951-1981

MISS JUNE CLARKE was the first female president of the Barbados Chamber of Commerce. She unsuccessfully contested the 1981 general election for the constituency of St. Michael South Central. She has been serving in the Senate since 1981. She is a member of the Barbados Labour Party.

MRS. V. CARMETA FRASER is the president of the National Organization of Women (NOW). She contested the 1976 general election on the ticket of the Democratic Labour Party. Mrs. Fraser is a Food Consultant.

MRS. SYBIL LEACOCK is a teacher and member of the Democratic Labour Party. She contested the 1976 and 1981 general elections for the constituency of St. Peter. She was unsuccessful on both occasions. Mrs. Leacock served in the Senate between 1975 and 1976.

MRS. E.L. MARTIN was a member of the Conservative Party formed by Mr. Herbert Dowding and Mr. Fred Goddard. She contested the 1961 general election for the constituency of St. George on the ticket of the Barbados National Party, the new name assumed by the Conservative Party. Her interest in politics began when she saw how active women were in the campaign of President Roosevelt in the United States.

MISS NORMA WEEKES began her political activity when she became the secretary of Mr. Ernest D. Mottley in 1946. She contested the 1971 and 1976 general elections on the ticket of the Barbados Labour Party but was unsuccessful on both occasions. Before contesting herself, she was always involved in Mr. Mottley's campaigns.

Appendix IV

INTERVIEW WITH MISS HAZELINE ODESSA GITTENS
First Female Parliamentary Secretary

In addition to the analysis of documentary data, the politics sector study of the Women in the Caribbean Project involved interviews with a number of women in public life in the Eastern Caribbean and Barbados. Interviews were conducted with the purpose of deriving information on the socialisation of these women, the circumstances which propelled them into public life, their assessment of their personal experience of participating in non-traditional roles and their view of contemporary women in their territories. Selection of respondents was based on the opinion of key informants, knowledge of their activities provided by official records and newspaper reports and on the accessibility of the women themselves.

Among the Barbados respondents was Hazeline Odessa Gittens, who was a senator in the Legislature and Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministries of Health and Education during the period 1964-1967, then in the Ministry of Education from 1967 to 1971. Born on June 2, 1911, Miss Gittens began her career as a teacher in Barbados in 1934, but left the island in 1943 to serve in the British Army. There she served initially as a private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), East Caribbean division, which was responsible for issuing equipment to the armed forces, especially the Eighth Army Division. Following her promotion to Sargeant, she became an instructor in Domestic Science and Cookery in the army, which post she held until the end of the war. After demobilisation, Miss Gittens entered the Colonial Office as a temporary civil servant with responsibility for all colonials particularly nurses. In that capacity she became closely associated with many West Indians, some of whom rose to prominent positions in their territories in later years.

As a result of her war service, Miss Gittens was able to receive her teacher training in the United Kingdom at the Bortwich Training College for Domestic Science and General Teacher Training from 1946-47, the National Society's Training College for Domestic Science 1947-1949 and the London School of Nutrition where she attended a three months' study course for Colonial Teachers in 1949. In the following year, Miss Gittens was awarded a Home Economics Fellowship from the FAO which enabled her to attend the University of Puerto Rico where she presented a research report on self-help housing in which she advocated the replacement of single-unit housing by two-storeyed units,

APPENDIX IV

an idea which was later incorporated into the design of government constructed housing units in Barbados. Attendance at a a Teachers' Semester at Columbia University, New York in 1954 marked the end of her participation in formal, institutional training. She holds a diploma in Nutrition and Canteen Management of the Good Housekeeping Institute, London, which she obtained in 1947/48 and has been a member of the Royal Society of Health since 1949.

On returning to the Caribbean in 1949, Miss Gittens taught in Barbados until 1957, then went to Grenada to supervise a Home Economics and School Feeding Programme which was being introduced by the Ministry of Education there. It was on her return to Barbados in 1963 that she became actively involved in Barbadian politics, though not actually facing the polls. Her main activity was confined to organisational work with the Democratic Labour Party and to the introduction and supervision of major social service programmes functioning under the aegis of the Ministries to which she was attached. Following her brief political career, she resumed the teaching of English and History at a leading girls' school, a career from which she has now retired. Miss Gittens holds the British Empire Medal and the British Overseas Medal in recognition of her war service on behalf of the Barbados Contingent.

In this edited transcript of an interview conducted by a staff member of the ISER(EC), Miss Gittens talks about her life.

The Institute wishes to express its appreciation to Miss Gittens for granting permission to conduct and publish the interview and for giving so much of her time in assisting us to finalise this edited version.

INTERVIEW WITH HAZELINE ODESSA GITTENS

What did your parents do?

My mother was a housewife and my father worked among the best class of white people as a sort of valet and I remember him telling us about Sir this person and Sir that person and all of that, you know, and he learned the English language like an Englishman and spoke in that way.

And that comes out in the way you speak as well.

Oh! we had to, we had to.

How large was the household?

There were four of us children, I am the last of four... I was one of the happiest children growing up. We were a very close knit family and my father used to sit us down and talk to us especially on Sundays.

So you would say that the household shaped your character?

Oh definitely! My father was an exemplary, respectable man. The only thing our household did not possess in good supply was money. My mother was a very good housekeeper and we kept animals - cows, pigs, sheep, everything - you name it. We had to see after all the animals, in spite of the fact that we had a yard man, and in the house we did all the housework. She would always say to us, 'come and see how it is done, and get it done. You can't train anybody unless you know how.' We were a Christian family. My father carried the Cross at St. Philip, he sang in the choir at St. Cyprian's and we were all brought up in the Anglican religion. We had nothing to do on Sundays but go to church, and come back and go to church again.

You were educated privately?

I would say elementary school. These were the formative days of my life and I had two very distinguished teachers - Florence Springer, who is now dead, Sir Hugh Springer's aunt, and Odessa McClean, who is still alive.

What do you remember most about your school days?

I can remember that if I didn't get my work done, tears would come flowing down. I was not like children of today who don't want to learn and who don't mind if they fail an exam. If I didn't know what to say and how to do it and get there first and do it first, I would be in floods of

tears and after that was over, I could see further on and I would go on. My school days were the happiest days of my life.

You said that the private school at which you were educated was selective.

Yes. Very selective.

Many whites were there?

No, we did not have white children but it was in the home of a white woman, Miss Best, and she was a very proper person. She had adopted this person who taught us - Miss Ince - and they were close knit people - very respectable but the selection was very, you know, out of this world. You had to come from somewhere. The first thing you were asked was where you lived and who you were and if you had a piano.

Were you active at school outside of school work?

Oh yes.

Debating societies and so on.

No! I was *the* debater. I was a talker. That was my forte. We also played games - basketball, netball, rounders. In later years I took up tennis. I used to sing soprano in the churches for the Christmas festivals and the Easter festivals, and we belonged to the Sunday School clubs, church groups, as distinct from the other things that are going on today. These were the early years when you had to be a proper person to have arrived.

And did you arrive?

Well I don't know. I know I arrived in my family.

Away from school now, as a youth growing up...

We had cliques - school cliques - approved families. We had the Whartons, the Connells, the Blackmans, we clubbed together, the Gibsons... we were a close knit set of families, in Sunday School and day school and family relationships and family ties, spending bank holidays with each other, going around in groups, in parties from place to place. Acknowledged respectable families. We did not have the fêtes and things that are going on now. We did not have them.

Did any political discussion take place in those days?

My father used to tell us about whom he would vote for and why, but that was all. Politics had not a place in life as it has today, you see... But if you train children to respect themselves and to think kindly of other people, you're bound to become a politician, that is, a true politician. The true politician is not the one that fattens his pockets because I've got nothing out of politics, absolutely nothing. All that you see around here my father died and left for us and if my brother did not come and live with me now, I would be on the dole, because my pension is very small - so I've got nothing out of politics but a bad name perhaps - absolutely nothing.

You lived in England for a while?

I joined the ATS and served in the war for six years. I went into college as a result of my war service and did my teacher training there.

Did you have any heroes while you were growing up? Was there anybody at whom you looked and told yourself: when I grow up I want to be like that person?

There was one woman - Audrey Jeffers of Trinidad. I used to follow her career in my teenage days and wonder if I would ever be able to fill a place in Barbados as she had in Trinidad.

What about Audrey Jeffers appealed to you?

Well, she actually worked with the poor children in Trinidad. She looked after the indigent mothers and set up the soup kitchens, and all that appealed to me. My house here used to feed every living day of the week people who did not have. So that I wondered about my school friends who were poorer than I was. It came to me, 'Why is it that this girl had to come to school in broken down shoes? What happened that she does not have the same lunch I have?' These things used to worry me, so that Audrey Jeffers stood out in my mind.

So while growing up did you have your mind fixed on any particular career?

I only had one career all my life - teaching. In our country the rich people have absolutely no connection with the poor - the middle class think they're superior. I said I want to work in a field where I can better the livelihood of the average working person and that is why I stuck to domestic science although I was a qualified teacher, with my teacher's certificates.

What was it like as a woman growing up in a society that was dominated by men?

It did not worry me. I had my father who was knowledgeable. I had my brothers who were useful. In those days I had a bevy of well-educated men friends and they were very brilliant. I had people, I could name them who used to come... we had clubs, debating societies, and we used to have impromptu speeches and talks. I did not feel inferior, neither did I feel superior. I was just one of the many. There wasn't anything I was aiming at to be *par excellence*. I just lived to learn.

What was your first job?

I became a teacher. In 1934 I was appointed an assistant teacher after I had my Cambridge (certificate). I then had to sit what was known as the Management Exam and I was appointed a teacher.

Has the fact of being a woman ever posed any problems for you in your work place?

I don't think so. I've never ever met a man who felt that he should have got my job. But I've had plenty problems at my work, all levelled at me by women whom I can only say, envied me for my ability.

Your problems never came from men?

Never ever. All my friends and men that I've met have had the greatest respect for my ability and my integrity - everyone. None has ever passed a fast joke at me - because I wouldn't have known it.

Have the problems you've had with women...?

They're dangerous and damaging. I came back from England highly qualified, very well recommended and I had, I can tell you, eight bitter years of tears, but I lived it down because that's my disposition.

What years were those?

In the 1950s.

Do you think that living in a society, with men and women there is any need to treat women differently?

I don't, personally I don't. I think that every woman has her place in life. If she is worth her salt it is bound

to be seen. Nobody has built me. I built myself. I did not have anybody to reflect in (their) glory.

Is that a message for the women of today?

I'm not concerned whether they get the message or not. They'll find it out by hook or by crook and nothing that they say will make a difference because if God wanted all women he would have made all women and if he wanted all men he would have made all men. There is this that I'd like to point out. There are some of us women who because we're not married might have some conspicuous little dirty innuendoes levelled at us, but if you have a clean face and you can face the public, you don't have to worry about that.

There is a view, Miss Gittens, that the woman's place is in the home. What do you think about that?

Well it depends on the home because now that the homes are being broken up so rapidly, I don't know where home is. I knew where home was. I've always been able to come back to a home and I've been welcome. But that is not the theme today.

What do you think is causing these broken homes today?

The fundamental parental training. As I told you, the only thing our family did not have was money. I knew where I was going and who I was and that nobody was superior to me except in brain power and I cultivated brain power. And if you train children like that they are bound to make a mark in life.

Were you ever affected by the question of race? This black and white thing? You're a black woman, very dynamic and all that...

Once or twice in England it came up very inauspiciously because whatever you say about the English people today, when we were there it was a different atmosphere. I've got some of the most treasured friends of my life who are aristocratic white people and they accept me at my face value. I meet them at their level. I was able to do that because I was well brought up. And this is the importance of today's life, and the breaking up of homes and the marriages breaking down and the children left to handle their own selves and not to have parental upbringing. That's the whole problem.

As a girl growing up, what did the word politics mean to you?

It meant this to me - that Mr. A.S. Bryden, Mr. George Manning, Mr. Frederick Clarke, C.P. Clarke and all of them were on top of some pedestal that no black person could reach - and I made sure that I reached there. I didn't know how it was going to come. The truth is I did not choose to go to England in the ATS specifically to help Britain win the war. I went to see if they were superior races in their own homes and therefore I had an objective when I went and my objective paid off. I was not able to pay my passage and go and have board and training in England because as I told you, we were poor people, we were not rich. But poverty to us was not a lack of food and clothing, it was that we did not have the cash flow.

Political issues have changed since the days of your growing up . There are new issues today. What does politics mean to you now?

I wouldn't like to tell you that, the words wouldn't sound very good. I'm afraid of what I'm seeing. I'm terrified. Throughout the whole of the Caribbean, I don't trust any politician. I can't take this scramble for money and power.

Was there a time when you could trust politicians?

You could trust them to a certain degree because they had standards to live up to and if they did dirty things they still did it in such a clean way. The clandestine part of it was not there but today everything is sleight of hand. Everything. I dread to think of what is going to happen to the next generation in the 21st century. I'm terrified.

Do you think that this has anything to do with the fact that enough women are not involved in politics?

It depends. I don't know because we've always had men whom we could rely on in politics. The men were not paid who ruled us. It is true they were paid in a different way because the wages for the working class people who supported them were so poor that they could easily put their hands in their pockets at all times and find money there and they can't do it now. But I think they had a greater sense of respectability. Politicians' language... their thought patterns... you want me to tell you that politics is something I like...not what I see and hear today! I'm terrified and I mean it and I'm grateful to God that I have no progeny. God knows what He does because I'd die a very unhappy woman. I would. The actual race pattern has changed and we've become greedier than any colonial person.

Now you were Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Education between...

1964 to 1971 - 7½ years.

The post of Parliamentary Secretary is a political appointment. What made you decide to accept?

I am a born politician - and I don't mean it in the sense of a person contesting elections and all that. I mean in the sense of a person interested in political affairs and who is always discussing them. As I said before, my father used to discuss politics with us as children and I learnt a lot from him. When I was in England I became a member of the Socialist Party - and helped to vote Mr. Churchill out! There too, I used to have many discussions with Mr. Errol Barrow, Mr. Cameron Tudor and people like that about the things we would like to do when we came back to Barbados to help the nation. I love my country. So when I was invited first to be a Senator and then a Parliamentary Secretary, I felt this was a chance to make my contribution. At first I was Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministries of Health and Education - for two and a half years. That was in 1964.

Did you have a chance to put any of your ideas into practice?

Oh yes. Certainly. It started with re-organising the storeroom at the Mental Hospital. I said you could not have the person responsible for food and nutrition also responsible for the budget and the money. You had to separate them. And things worked better. Then, I turned to Day Care facilities. I set up committees all over the island. After a lot of discussion, the Ministry agreed to set up Day Care Centres or Day Nurseries in the housing areas. So we put them in places like Grazettes and so on.

During that time I was also responsible for organising the transfer of the hospital to its present site. That was a big operation but the very present matron had just returned from England and she worked really hard with me to make the transfer a smooth one. I thought that her work was worthy of some recognition and that she should be given some sort of award. That's how she got her MBE. She doesn't even know that. This is the first time that I'm saying this. But I think that it's time for her to know.

Then it was the School Meals Service. At that time it was being run on a pilot basis - in three schools I think it was - by one person. It was very expensive. They were

serving food to those children on plates which cost one guinea. Five dollars and four cents! Hollow ware plates. Can you imagine that? Well, you know, I had to put a stop to that. But my main job with the programme was to extend it to cover all the schools in the island. I had to bring in the large scale stoves, large scale pots - you know, to move them away from the tripod style cooking. Of course, I'd learnt about large scale cookery during my years in the army, so it wasn't a problem for me.

Then I had to try to find the food. At the time we were getting the school milk and biscuits and the donors were saying they had to help those countries that weren't as well off as we were. But we had to find the food to cook. So I told the Government not to worry, the food would come. The Government arranged for me to go to Rome to make an appeal to the World Food Programme. On my way I had to stop in Washington on personal business and there I met the Director of the FAO World Food Programme. I put my case before him; he agreed, the contract was drawn up and signed right there in Washington before I had even gone to Rome. Anyway, I still had to go to make the formal request. We got milk, butter, fat, flour, dried fruit of all kinds, peas - oh! we got a lot of things. And as a result problems with the school children's health, teeth and eyes reduced drastically.

You were a Parliamentary Secretary for a total of seven and a half years. What happened after the two and a half years spent in the Ministries of Health and Education?

Well then I went over entirely to the Ministry of Education. I spent five years there. The Democratic Labour Party won the 1966 election and I was appointed first as a Senator. Then as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Education. Mr. Erskine Sandiford was the Minister.

What was your main programme then?

Most of my time was devoted to the School Meals programme where I could use my training in Domestic Science and Nutrition. My preference was for the Domestic Science side of it, but I was very fortunate to have an excellent assistant in Muriel Bourne. She liked nutrition. So we made a very good team.

Acceptance of the post of Parliamentary Secretary meant a shift from a teaching to a political career. What kinds of adjustments did you have to make?

None whatsoever.

What was it like being the first woman Parliamentary Secretary in Barbados?

I did not have any complex at all. You know I'm not trying to make you believe I am who I'm not. As you see me here in this house, so am I to people outside. I teach children that if they depend on themselves, that if they develop the resource within themselves, they will get through in life.

The DLP won the election of 1971 but you were not reappointed. Was there any reason for this?

By that time I had decided to return to teaching which was really my first love. As a matter of fact the elections were called for November of that year but I had already arranged to return to my old job in September.

In reviewing your teaching and political careers, where would you say you've made your greater contribution?

In teaching by far. Most definitely. There is nowhere that I go, even now, that I don't meet people who thank me for what I taught them years ago. Just last week I got a birthday card and a gift from someone I taught in Grenada during my years there. It's a wonderful thing.

You never thought about actually running for the House?

The House of Assembly in Barbados is a warmongering place where people use other people as if they're footstools, and I would be violent if anybody did that to me, so I stayed away. I would be violent if anybody behaved to me as they do to each other in the House.

Your main political work seems to have been chanelled through the DLP. Were you a member of the Democratic League of Women?

Yes. I joined the League from the time it started in 1966 and I'm still a paying member. I like to work with people with whom I could discuss ideas and issues seriously. When I returned to Barbados from England I used to spend a great deal of time in informal political discussions with Mr. Barrow and Cammie Tudor, whom I mentioned earlier; with the late Sir Grantley Adams - he wasn't Sir at the time - and the late Dr. Gordon Cummins and others. I was very close to those people and could always work better with them. Because I respected them and they respected me. But I've always been a Labourite. And always will be.

What do you think men think of women who get away from the home, who get involved in public life, politics...?

Well! I knew a woman whom I liked very much... Mrs. Olga Symmonds, and she was a woman I think, a little before her time. She was very involved in the training of adults. She had concerts and she really did a lot for the working class people in this country, coloured girls, nurses and teachers, and clerks in the stores, at the Girls' Industrial Union. And people have hinted time and again that perhaps her husband felt she was more the property of the people than of the home, but I don't think that ever deterred her. People are born for specific purposes and they must develop what's in them or they become cranks.

So you don't see the involvement of women in public life affecting their families?

No, I don't. I've always had to come home and cook and sweep and dust and clean as well as work, and if I had children, I would have had to look after them and still go to work to feed them and it would all have been done. It is how we develop the resources within ourselves. Some of us are very lazy people you know. I'd like to pick up all the women in Barbados and take them to two places - England and Israel and they would see how life is lived. Not North America at all - England and Israel - and they would see how people live and how women work.

What do you think about the Feminist Movement?

I don't stop to think about it. I really don't. It has never applied to me. I have always been a feminist. I have not got to put on any cloak or throw off any brassières. I'm sorry for the women and I feel those women should not have children. Their children are going to lose the best part of their upbringing. I'm not telling you that there are not men who used to treat women badly. In these West Indian islands the women were the drudges because the men treated them like slaves and if they accepted well - that is their right, but some of us women accept the part we have to play and play both parts well. If you are trained and equipped to do it, there is nothing wrong with it.

As far as you are concerned it is not an issue?

Not with me. I'm not telling you that it is not an issue with the world. There is a bad issue... but I could never join the group, because I have no complaints.

Do you think, as some persons do, that these women who are vocally supportive of feminism are middle-class nuisances?

I would not say that they are middle-class nuisances. I would refer you back to women like Elizabeth Fry, who really saw the need for reformation among women and again back to Florence Nightengale who was brought up in a well-to-do home and nurtured in cotton wool and yet went out and did her duty. You have a duty to perform and if it is so pertinent that it comes up, you've got to do it. And if these women are feminists, they'll show their feminity, but then they should not marry if they hate men so. They should leave the men to become women too. Plenty of the men are turning into women so they'll get plenty of company.

An organisation, for example, like the National Organisation of Women... what role do you think that organisation...?

I don't include myself in that at all. I don't join organisations for the sake of joining organisations. I watch things very carefully and I have always been an individual. I am not able to be talked down to by anybody, from the priest down. Thank God, as I told you earlier on, I've had in my life a mixture of good brilliant men who could talk to me at my level and whom I could ask questions, if I were left in the lurch. So that I can't listen to this rabble-scrabble of women. I can't. I went to Guyana for their Republic Celebrations and I joined CARIWA[1]. My name was the first on the list there, and I was in that organisation for three years. Then I saw where it was heading and I politely bowed out. I have no intention of changing one colonial master for another, whether he is from Russia or wherever. I saw where it was going. They are the noisy bunch... they have something to shout about. I am an individual. That's my nature.

Do you think it is the weaker and more insecure women who shout?

I don't know. I have not had enough chance to look at them and I don't even intend to. If they have a case it will come out and if there is not a case, it will peter out (laugh).

Are women and men equal?

According to God, yes! But if He wanted them equal He would not have made woman to be subservient to man.

[1]Caribbean Women's Association

So you think women are made to be subservient to men?

Men cannot play a woman's role and it is the gynaecological difference in woman that makes them something to love and if they don't develop that, we're lost!

Some people hold the view that women who do the things men do lose their femininity. Do you agree with that?

I've told you already that these things do not apply to me, you're trying to trap me (laugh). I have done my role as a woman and I have done a role that men can do, but I did it as a woman. I did not turn into a man. I did it as a woman.

The final question is: What do you think are the main issues facing the women in the Caribbean today?

Opportunity. Real opportunity. There is no doubt about it. Some have financial difficulties,others have educational difficulties and some have a will to become somebody. There is nothing wrong with that - and those are the three difficulties facing women today. You see, they have not got background. They do not do enough introspective thinking. They don't read enough. Our women are poor - they are paupers educationally - I don't mean academically. I mean they don't have a thought path. They can't discuss anything but a picture from the cinema. God has given me ability and I've used it. Most of our Caribbean women are devoid of that.

Are they devoid of it because men have stood in their way?

No. They are not the real thinkers of the world. You've got to be able to see something in perspective, work towards it and see everything that impinges on it, and this is where men have the advantage over women. There is no doubt about it. There are very few women who can discuss a topic. How many women in this country read books other than novels?

Do you think they have the time?

Come and look in my garden and see if I have the time. We do not keep a maid. Look in my house - this is not decorated for you.

So it is laziness, a question of attitudes?

Attitudes! Some people used to say 'you think you know everything' and I used to crown it by saying 'I don't think I know, I know I know! I get a little bumptious at

times and impetuous with people. To me, as women, we do not accept women as they should be accepted. You are who you are. You cannot change who you are.

So the task of the woman then... the human being... is to know himself?

That is the crux of it. And whatever you can do, will be done.

Are you saying that unless women change their attitudes, no matter how many laws are passed, they will not be any better off?

The law cannot make a person. The law is made by man. Human beings are made by God and He made certain women to fill certain posts... but you cannot make a law to make a woman a judge - you've got to have the ability and credibility to be a judge.

Women and Politics

This preliminary paper documents available information about the actual participation of women in the various levels of political activity in Barbados during a period characterized by constitutional and electoral change, enlargement of the franchise, and the emergence of a cohesive labour and mass political movement. It presents initial research findings of female participation in local politics; the Legislative Council, House of Assembly and Senate; membership of statutory boards, commissions and public corporations: and female partisan involvement in electoral politics between 1951-1981.

The authors conclude that in recent years, women in general have become committed to the electoral system, but have failed to use their potential voting power in support of feminist issues or female candidates; women are still poorly represented in the national political arena and remain largely outside the circle of formal political power interests.

The Contributors

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